

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-04

CEA-01 L-03 H-01 DHA-02 AGRE-00 /084 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 629

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, ETRD, CO

SUBJECT: COLOMBIAN-U.S. BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS

1. THE RECENT VISIT OF CONGRESSMAN CHARLES VANIK, CHAIRMAN OF THE WAYS AND MEANS SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRADE AND CONGRESSMAN GUY VANDER JAGT, MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE, PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A REVIEW OF U.S. - COLOMBIAN BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS AT THE MINISTERIAL AND TECHNICAL LEVELS OF THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION. A NUMBER OF THEMES EMERGED WHICH, WHILE NOT NEW, WERE EXPRESSED WITH GREATER OPTIMISM THAN IN THE RECENT PAST BECAUSE THE COLOMBIANS HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS REGARDING THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION.

2. COLOMBIANS VIEW THEIR COUNTRY AS A CLOSE AND LOYAL TRADING PARTNER OF THE U.S., AS ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING DEMOCRACIES IN THE THIRD WORLD, AND AS AN EVOLVING MARKET ECONOMY IN A WORLD DRIFTING TOWARD STATIST ECONOMIC SOLUTIONS. BECAUSE OF PAST U.S. EMPHASIS ON SOUND MARKET ECONOMICS, AND BECAUSE OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S FOCUS ON BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS, COLOMBIA HOPES THAT ITS IMPORTANT BILATERAL TRADE ISSUES WILL RECEIVE NEW AND MORE FLEXIBLE CONSIDERATION IN WASHINGTON.

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COLOMBIA BELIEVES THAT IT HAS BEEN ASKING FOR VERY LITTLE. IT IS NOT SEEKING CONCESSIONS, BUT THE ABSENCE OF THREATS OF DISCRIMINATION AND A GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN APPLYING THE BILATERAL TEXTILE AGREEMENT. WHILE THE COLOMBIANS EXPRESS AN UNDERSTANDING OF OUR PROBLEMS, THEY ARE ALSO AWARE THAT THE VOLUMES OF COLOMBIAN EXPORTS ARE MINISCULE IN THE U.S. ECONOMY.

THEY WONDER WHAT OUR COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY AND OUR BELIEF IN FREE MARKETS AND FREE TRADE MEANS, WHEN A SMALL DEMOCRACY, WITH AN EVOLVING MARKET ECONOMY, THAT VIEWS ITSELF AS AN ALLY AND A VOICE OF REASON IN THIRD WORLD FORUMS, WITHER FACES OR IS THREATENED BY DISCRIMINATION IN PRECISELY THE PRODUCTS IN WHICH IT HAS ACHIEVED CERTAIN MARKET EFFICIENCIES.

3. COLOMBIA'S PRESENT LEADERS AND TECHNOCRATS VIEW THEIR ECONOMY AND THEIR DEMOCRACY AS THREATENED BY THEIR OWN PAST AND THEY HAVE A NEW DEVELOPMENT MODEL IN MIND, A MODEL THEY LEARNED FROM THE U.S. AND WHICH THEY BELIEVE CAN EVENTUALLY SOLVE MANY OF THEIR PROBLEMS. THEY BELIEVE THAT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THEIR PRODUCTS BY THE INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES STRENGTHENS COLOMBIA'S PROTECTIONISTS AND CENTRALIZERS WHO WOULD TAKE THE COUNTRY BACK TO THE OLD MODEL, WHICH IS NO LONGER VIABLE. BEING A POOR AND SURPLUS LABOR ECONOMY, CENTRALIZATION AND PROTECTION IN COLOMBIA PROTECTS THE RICH. WITH CONCENTRATIONS OF WEALTH AND POWER, THE CENTRALIZERS AND CONTROLLERS WILL IN TURN BE CONTROLLED BY THE SAME RICH. COLOMBIANS, THEREFORE, SEE THE GROWTH OF THEIR HIGHLY EMPLOYMENT INTENSIVE EXPORTS AS THE BACKBONE OF A GENERAL LIBERALIZATION NECESSARY FOR THE BALANCE ECONOMIC GROWTH ON WHICH, THEY BELIEVE, THE STRENGTH OF THEIR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS DEPENDS.

4. HENCE, WHEN THE FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSED TO THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONGRESSMEN THE HOPE THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN EXPANDING WORLD TRADE, HE WAS REFERRING TO A LEADERSHIP THAT CREATES AN ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH MARKET BASED DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES CAN PROSPER. SANCHEZ

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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